BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

Issue: 98-11 5 Pages
March 20, 1998

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Census

Travel to work

- **Eight out of ten British Columbians travel to work as a driver (74%) or passenger (7%) in a car, truck or van.** Nationally, a similar percentage of workers (81%) travel to their workplace in private vehicles. Driving to work in a car, truck or van is most prevalent in Atlantic Canada (87%), Saskatchewan (85%) and Alberta (83%). It is least common in NWT (49%) and Yukon (78%). *Source: 1996 Census of Canada*

- **Ontario and Quebec (both at 12%) have the highest incidence of public transit usage in the country.** Transit usage is also quite common in Manitoba (10%) and BC (9%). In other regions, usage rates range from less than half a percent in PEI to 8% in Alberta. The national average is 10%. *Source: 1996 Census of Canada*

- **Seven percent of BC residents walk to work.** This is equal to the national average. Residents of the two territories are far more likely to walk to work than other Canadians. Walking is the usual mode of transportation for 42% of workers in NWT, and for 15% of Yukon residents. Rates in the rest of the country range from 6% in Ontario to 10% in Saskatchewan.

  One in four Canadians who cycle or ride a motorbike to work live in BC. Two percent of British Columbians usually cycle to work. Victorians are more likely than residents of other Canadian cities to either walk (10%) or cycle (5%) to work.
  Source: 1996 Census of Canada

Place of work

- **Eighty percent of British Columbians reported that they usually worked at a location other than their home during the week prior to the census.** Eleven percent–more than in any other part of the country–said they had no fixed work address. This group includes people such as construction workers and landscapers. People working at home, including those on farms, made up 9% of the workforce, and half a percent said they usually worked outside Canada. Nationally, 84% of Canadians usually worked at a fixed address away from their home, 8% had no fixed workplace address, and 8% worked at home. Less than half a percent of Canadians usually worked outside the country. More British Columbians worked outside Canada (9,515) than in any other region except Ontario (23,835). Nationally, 49,275 Canadian residents usually worked abroad. *Source: 1996 Census of Canada*

Unpaid household work

- **Nine out of ten adults (aged 15 and over) in British Columbia said they spent some time doing unpaid housework or home maintenance during the week prior to the census.** Women (92%) were only slightly more likely than men (86%) to do some unpaid work, but they were much more likely to spend more than 14 hours a week on housework or home maintenance. Just under half (48%) of women said they worked more than 14 hours, compared to 23% of men. On the opposite end of the scale, 30% of men, and 16% of women, did less than 5 hours of unpaid work.

  Among the regions, the likelihood that people spent at least some time doing unpaid work was lowest in Newfoundland (85%) and highest in Saskatchewan (90%). BC was at the national average (89%). *Source: 1996 Census of Canada*

Report **Off the dole...**

Did you know...?

More Canadian men work as truck drivers than in any other occupation. This might be one of the reasons why country music is the second most popular radio station format in Canada.

The Economy

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia decreased 2.5% (seasonally adjusted) in January.** The decrease in shipments was widespread across all sectors, with the transportation equipment (+19.1%) and machinery and equipment (+3.3%) industries being the only exceptions. Canadian shipments fell 3.8%. The effects of the ice storm were felt in Ontario (-3.6%) and Quebec (-5.1%), but shipments were also down in other parts of the country not affected by the storm. PEI (+2.9%) and Newfoundland (+0.7%) were the only regions where shipments increased. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC product exports plunged in January to 18.1% below the January 1997 level.** The main culprits were the energy (-23.0%), industrial goods (-21.9%), forest products (-21.6%) and agriculture (-8.9%) sectors. However, automotive (16.6%) and consumer goods (5.7%) exports continued to post significant gains over last year.

  Canadian exports were only marginally (+0.3%) higher than in January 1997. The national average was pulled down by the slump in BC and Alberta (where exports fell for the third straight month, decreasing 15.2%), and to a lesser degree in Saskatchewan (-5.2%) and New Brunswick (-10.0%). Despite the ice storm, exports from Quebec rose 0.9%, and Ontario posted an 8.8% gain over January 1997.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Retail sales in British Columbia were down 0.3% (seasonally adjusted) in January after increasing 2.2% in the previous month.** Sales fell 1.9% nationally. Saskatchewan (+0.7%) and Yukon (+0.6%) were the only regions to post increases. The effects of the downturn in retail sales were relatively mild in BC: sales fell 5.0% in Quebec, and in the rest of Canada, declines ranged from 0.5% in Manitoba to 1.7% in Nova Scotia. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sales by wholesalers decreased 0.7% in January.** Wholesale sales were down in five of the ten provinces, with Alberta (-5.4%) recording the largest decline. Nationally, the value of wholesale sales edged down 0.1% in January.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Tourism

- **Provincial room revenues increased 5.4% (seasonally adjusted) in November to $103.5 million.** The increase was the largest since December 1996, and marked the first time that seasonally adjusted revenues have ever topped $100 million.

  The APEC Economic Leader's Meeting, held in Vancouver last November, was a major factor in the strong growth. Revenues in Mainland/Southwest were up 7.8%, and large hotels, which accommodated many of the Summit visitors, saw their revenues increase 12.7%. Most of the province's large hotels are located in the downtown Vancouver area. However, even without the effects of the APEC summit meeting in November, the Mainland/Southwest region has been a driving force in provincial room revenue growth during recent years. Northeast (3.4%), Vancouver Island/Coast (2.2%) and North Coast (1.6%) were the only other regions where revenues increased. In the rest of the province, room revenues declined at rates ranging from 0.1% in Thompson/Okanagan to 11.0% in Cariboo.

  Source: BC STATS

- **The number of passengers travelling through Vancouver International Airport continued to increase in January.** There were 1.1 million people who used the airport, 5.4% more than in the same month last year.

  Source: Vancouver Airport Authority

- **The number of non-residents entering the country through a BC customs port was 10.1% higher in January than in the same month last year.** Entries from the US were 11.5% higher than a year earlier, while overseas entries rose a more modest 3.3%. For the first time since last May, entries from Europe increased (+16.7%). The number of entries from Asia was only marginally (-0.1%) lower than in January 1997, despite the "Asian flu". Total entries to Canada from Asia were down sharply (-16.9%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Infoline Report:
March 20, 1998

BC's Unemployed .... Fewer Today Receive Employment Insurance Benefits

Originally published in Nov 1997 issue of *Earnings & Employment Trends*. An annual subscription is $60 + GST

The old Unemployment Insurance program underwent considerable changes over the 90s. Between 1990 and 1995 there were numerous measures introduced to tighten up eligibility requirements and reduce duration on claim. This was the Federal Government's attempt to reduce UI caseloads and expenditures. So far, the measures have been very successful.

These changes to the previous UI system have resulted in dramatic declines in the number of persons in BC who qualify for insurance benefits. In 1992, the UI beneficiary to unemployment ratio was 77 per cent. Since then, that ratio declined each year so that by 1996 it stood at 56 per cent.

In 1996, there was a further major restructuring which merged the National Training Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act into the "Employment Insurance Act". Despite assurances from the Federal Government that the changes would not further affect the overall caseload but would merely redistribute it, the number of BC unemployed receiving benefits (now called EI benefits, instead of UI benefits) continues to drop. Today the EI beneficiary to unemployment ratio is 7 percentage points lower than in 1996, at 49 per cent.

Tightening Up of EI Legislation Has Had a Serious Impact on the Number of Persons Who Qualify For Benefits in BC

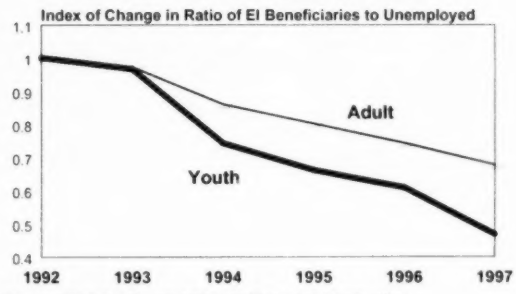
Source: Statistics Canada LFS and HRDC administrative files.

The main criteria that determines qualification for EI benefits is the number of hours of insured employment an individual has clocked during the previous twelve months. By definition, this criteria eliminates all new entrants, and most re-entrants to the job market, from collecting EI. It also diminishes the chances of the marginalized workforce to accumulate adequate insured employment to be able to collect EI. This has always been the case with the EI program, but the tightening up of the rules has had the greatest impact on this group, those who can afford it least.

It makes sense that youth's EI coverage is considerably lower than the adult population as they are often new entrants to the workforce as well as on-again/off-again employees, swinging back and forth between school and work. In 1992, the youth EI beneficiary to unemployment ratio was 48 per cent compared to 90 per cent for adults.

Since that time, the adult ratio has dropped to 61 per cent but the youth ratio has plummeted to a mere 22 per cent. In other words, only two-thirds (61/90) of the adult unemployed population who could collect EI back in 1992 are able to collect benefits under the revamped rules of today, while for youth the situation is even more dire – less than half the youth of today (46 per cent or 22/48) are as lucky to collect EI as youth were in 1992.

All Age Groups Have Seen Declines in the Number Who Qualify for EI Benefits but Youth Have Been Most Affected



Source: Statistics Canada LFS and HRDC administrative files.

The Employment Insurance fund is accumulating large surpluses as benefits paid plunge and premium revenues increase. Because the new

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EI policies appear to have hurt youth the most, it could be argued that the surplus should be targeted to directly benefit them. Now that the Employment Insurance Act includes the responsibility for training, federal programs that subsidize employers who hire youth thus providing them with on-the-job training should be expanded. (A possibility could be to refund CPP and EIC contributions by employers that cover employees under the age of 20.)

TITLES OF PREVIOUS ISSUES	ISSUE NUMBER
Important Sectors for Youth Employment	97-10
Duration of Unemployment	97-09
Men & Women in the BC Job Market--20 Yr Persp.	97-08
Workers' Pensions	97-07
Youth:; How Have They Fared in the 90's?	97-06
The Value of Education - It pays to stay in school	97-05
Service Producing Industries in BC	97-04
Males Are they becoming "Stay-at -home Dads?	97-03
Average Weekly Earnings in BC	97-02
Work Sharing-Solution for BC's unemployment?	97-01
Earnings of Men & Women	96-12
Women's Labour Market Participation	96-11
Low Income Rates in BC	96-10
Occupational Structure in BC	96-09
Career Activity-Comparisons of Young Men & Women	96-08
Idle Youth-Is it a growing problem in BC	96-07
Students & Summer Employment	96-06
Comparisons of Employment in BC	96-05
Changes to the Survey of Emp, Payroll & Hours	96-04
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Population Projections - Employment Equity Groups	95-12
Early Retirement for men Age 55-64	95-11

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Infoline

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/97	% change on one year ago
BC	3,943.9	1.9
Canada	30,377.8	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change on
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	one year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jan	2,740	-7.3
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jan	1,858	-18.1
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jan	2,791	-0.7
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Jan '98	one year ago
BC	109.7	0.4
Canada	108.2	1.1
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Feb '98	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,023	1.1
Employed - BC	1,827	-0.1
Unemployed - BC	197	13.8
		Feb '97
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	9.7	8.6
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.6	9.7
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 18/98	Mar 19/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.40	5.05
- 5 year	6.85	7.00
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 18/98	Mar 19/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4186	1.3785
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7049	0.7254
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Dec '97	one year ago
BC	615.66	-0.3
Canada	601.62	1.1

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

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Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, February 1998
- Small Business Quarterly, Fourth Quarter 1997
- Earnings & Employment Trends, Dec. 1997
- Tourism Room Revenue, November 1997

Next week

- no subscription releases

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